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Remarks

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested, particularly as herein amended.

The Office Action of January 4, 2007, first rejects claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, because the recited subject matter is not considered to be described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to practice the invention. In particular, reference is made to the recited "third machining operation", which is initially performed at a second depth greater than a recited first depth, and which is thereafter performed at a depth which becomes identical to the first depth.

In reply, claim 2 has been amended to better follow the disclosure provided in paragraph [0020] of the specification. It is submitted that applicant's specification provides a clear description of the currently recited subject matter which is sufficient to enable one skilled in the art to practice the invention, overcoming the rejection of claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

Claims 1, 4, 9, 11, 16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a proposed combination of McSpadden (US 5,938,440) with what has been characterized as "Admitted Prior Art" (APA), referring to Figure 1 of the drawings for this patent application. Claims 3, 10 and 17 are rejected

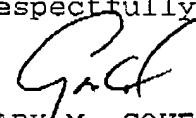
under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a proposed combination of McSpadden and what has been characterized as "Admitted Prior Art" (APA) with Farzin-Nia (WO 99/37235). Claims 9 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a proposed combination of what has been characterized as "Admitted Prior Art" (APA) with Matsutani (US 4,604,884). Claims 10, 11, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a proposed combination of what has been characterized as "Admitted Prior Art" (APA) with Matsutani and Farzin-Nia.

However, it is further indicated that claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 19 and 20 would be allowable if suitably rewritten.

Claim 1 of this patent application has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 5, claim 9 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 12, and claim 16 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 19. Claims 5, 12 and 19 have been canceled, and the dependencies of claims 6, 13 and 20 have been correspondingly amended. Claims 7, 8, 14, 15, 21 and 22, which are drawn to the non-elected subject matter identified in applicant's Reply filed on October 17, 2006, have also been canceled.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this patent application has been placed in condition for allowance and corresponding action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



GARY M. COHEN, ESQ.  
Reg. No. 28,834  
Attorney for Applicant  
Tel.: (610) 975-4430

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. 571-273-8300) on:  
March 9, 2007.

Date: 3/9/07

  
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Gary M. Cohen, Esq.